



# The View from the Army IO Proponent: Colonel David Haught Interview

*Interviewed by John Whisenhunt, Editor*

**Editorial Abstract:** COL Haught spoke with IO Sphere during a 2008 JIOWC visit. He shares his views on growing the future generations of dedicated Army IO professionals, describing recent trends in IO education, published guidance, and lessons learned.

**IOS:** Your organization has helped capture many of the successes stories in the War of Ideas against extremists. What organizations or groups do you feel are doing the best in this fight? Who provides the best model?

**DH:** Something we've come to understand is that there isn't any single model that holds up to every operational environment. Not only will requirements continue to change in the future, they'll look different from one area of operations to another, from each commander's unique operational environment to another. What's more, the optimal organization for disrupting or usurping an adversary's decision cycle looks very different from one focused on developing and enabling collaborative actors to solve or head off their own problems. The clear take-away from Chapter 7 of [US Army] Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, is that each new situation will require different combinations of informational activity as integral rather than adjunct to the operation. What we've tried to do is to adapt the construct, the way we organize to integrate informational activity into the operation, to do two things: first, to gain more flexibility for the commander; and second, to really emphasize the commander's centrality—the point where actions, words, and images come together in a coherent operational design and plan.

**IOS:** As IO folks, we're big proponents of interagency teaming, but critics say the IO business is still too complex since the US Government has many departments who sometimes seem at odds. What approaches seem to work best in the interagency and intergovernmental communities?



*COL David Haught  
Director, US Army Information  
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**DH:** As FM 3-0 makes clear, joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multi-national communities are integral to full spectrum operations. First, it's important we appreciate the unique cultures that characterize these communities and the organizations that represent them. Second, personal engagements with these counterparts are critical. You simply can't expect them to come to you. Get out, engage. Professional but personal relationships go a long way in helping to build bridges across organizational and cultural lines. We have to remember engagement is not just us, the US Army or the military, transmitting our message. We have to think in terms of a comprehensive approach to the mission – more than military and more than “whole of government.” Balancing advocacy and inquiry is really what's important. Regardless of how you've organized, if you don't share an understanding of the problem, and of your respective

organizational roles in resolving the problem, there won't be much teaming.

**IOS:** This influence business is always looking for folks who combine creativity and technical experience. It's tough to find a soldier who can “do it all.” How can we recruit more people with a broad appreciation for “both sides of the brain?”

**DH:** The difference is not between “creative,” meaning “people-oriented and cognitive” experience, and “technical,” meaning computer and electronics-oriented experience. The reality is all fields of endeavor require both technical proficiency of a body of knowledge and creativity in achieving and applying that proficiency. We've come to realize everybody has technical requirements, whether those involve organizing public communication or executing command and control warfare, for instance. Both these skill sets are skills our 21st Century warriors need, but they are different—different expertise if you will. The Army has come to realize what commanders need are folks who have deep subject matter expertise and proficiency in areas of like techniques. The training requirement is to develop personnel who truly master the technical requirements of particular mission areas; the education requirement is to develop leaders who master the art and science of each. That's led, among other things, to recently standing up the US Army Computer and Electronic Warfare Proponent (USACEWP) to develop true experts in that field while, at the same time, the US Army Information Operations Proponent (USAIO) continues to produce world-class information engagement experts. Trying to develop any single officer with

the technical proficiency and masters of the art and science of the divergent technical requirements is probably not going to provide us the best expertise in either area.

**IOS:** *The Army has taken the lead in developing a career path for certifying IO professionals. How would you characterize the progress of the FA30 specialty? Do you see any notable changes in life cycle management of IO career officers?*

**DH:** Let me return to this notion of deep expertise in each mission area. As we studied requirements, lessons learned, experiences, history, and what experts say about the future world we'll live and operate in, we asked: "what is it that commanders (and their units) will have to do?" After all, shouldn't that answer drive the sort of career force the Army builds? The answer, we found, is that commanders will have to tackle three basic operational challenges in any type military operation; i.e., three overarching tasks they'll have to successfully accomplish regardless of the specific mission they've been assigned. These are: one, to maintain the trust and confidence of home and allied publics while gaining the confidence and support of local publics and actors; two, to win the psychological contest of wills with adversaries or potential adversaries; and three, to win the contest for use of information technology and the electromagnetic spectrum. All the tools in the commander's kit bag conceivably can be applied to each of the three challenges. But, when he reaches into that kit bag, he will want someone who really understands the tool. One of the things the Army has realized, as I said earlier, is that trying to develop any single officer to be able to bring deep expertise to bear in multiple mission areas, multiple areas of technical expertise, is probably unwise and certainly impractical. So, we're committed to developing a pool of personnel with deep expertise in what FM 3-0 calls "Information Engagement" and another pool of officers with a

similarly deep expertise in "Cyber-Electronic Warfare." For the latter, the Army has already established a new functional area for Electronic Warfare (FA 29) and preliminary work has begun in identifying requirements for a Cyber Career Field. For the information engagement piece, what you can think of as the tactical and operational application of Strategic Communication, we've focused the FA 30 qualification course on preparing officers to be the S- or G-7s of their formations, that is to say, the Information Engagement Officer. Of course, the Army has a requirement to provide officers for joint assignments and we understand the joint community views things a little differently than we do, at least for now. So, the Army will send personnel to the Joint Information Operations Planners Course [see page 38 of this issue] prior to their joint assignment. Let me add this thought: the Services provide different kind of experts. From the Navy and the Air Force, the J39 gets deep expertise and experience in cyber-electronic aspects. From the Army, the J39 soon will also be able to draw on the ranks of FA 29s and Cyber Career Field. But, what they get from the Army alone are deep subject matter experts in the art and science of human communication and interaction—the engagement and collaboration side of military operations. As you know, the Army is currently the only service with a career field dedicated to this aspect of full spectrum operations. These experts also get more than twenty instructional days in the FA 30 Qualification Course focused on learning and applying the IO capabilities per the Joint constructs. In other words, we work on the premise that officers with deep subject matter expertise in Information Engagement also must understand all the other capabilities in the commander's arsenal in order to help him establish a stable environment that sets the conditions for a lasting, if relevant, peace.

**IOS:** *As the Army IO proponent, you are charged with increasing understanding and awareness of all of the IO functional areas. Can you describe some of your team's successes in*

*broadening Service and Joint community understanding of this business?*

**DH:** Certainly the publication of doctrine, most recently chapter 7 of FM 3-0, is the bedrock for creating a basis for common understanding and action for achieving the full potential of information as an integral part of full spectrum operations. But, we're also engaged in professional dialogue across the globe, participating in symposia, workshops, and other venues where we share the US Army perspective, listen to and learn from the perspectives of others, and help to create an improved shared understanding of the role information plays in operations. For example, in a variety of venues we have shared our understanding of how IO concepts and doctrine have developed historically from the old notion of Command, Control, and Communications Countermeasures (C3CM), through the Command and Control Warfare--centered IO construct with which we began this war, to the current balanced approach that gives equal weight to the constructive use of informational activity: engagement, collaboration, communication, and cooperation. We believe we've mapped out the source of some of the confusion associated with these mission areas and a way through that confusion which pays attention to both the enduring requirement to disrupt, degrade and so on, an enemy's decision cycle—while protecting our own. These sessions have been very well received in a variety of venues with sister services and allied forces. Our sister services, whose officers are going to be deployed to missions such as supporting ground component forces or serving on provincial reconstruction teams in Iraq or Afghanistan, have begun sending officers to the Army's FA 30 Qualification Course. Several allied nations also have expressed interest to send officers to our course. Again, what the Army brings to this and future fights are experts in affecting an adversary's decision cycle and other experts to capitalize on the constructive power of engaging, communicating, and collaborating with the various actors and publics.

## About the US Army Information Operations Proponent:

### *Mission:*

*Develop the capabilities and capacity across Army DOTMLPF that leverage the power of information to achieve mission success across the full range of military operations.*

### *Vision:*

*An Army with capabilities, capacity, and cultural bias for leveraging the power of information in operations to advance national security objectives.*

### *Key Tasks:*

- \* Promote the transformation of the Army culture to capitalize on the power of information in full spectrum operations*
- \* Promote concepts and doctrine that capitalizes on information as an element of, and elemental to, combat power (Doctrine)*
- \* Build force structure to establish relevant capability and capacity in the modular force (Organizations)*
- \* Develop subject matter experts and competency across the Army (Training, Leadership and Education)*
- \* Man the force ICW HRC -- FA 30 Personnel Proponency (Personnel)*
- \* Implement material and facility solutions (Material, Facilities)*

**IOS:** *Your organization sponsors an annual writing IO contest, and our journal has been pleased to publish several of the winner's papers. Is some of their thinking making its way into DOTMLPF [doctrine, organizations, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities]?*

**DH:** Absolutely. Part of the mission of our Combined Arms Center (CAC) is to collect and analyze the experiences, reflection, and analytic thinking of a wide and relevant group of sources. The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) remains the focus for that effort, but everyone at CAC has a share in the mission. We are no different. The Proponent leverages the work of CALL, the Counterinsurgency Center, and others, as we—being mindful of the past and current best practices—think about advancing doctrine and future capabilities across the Army domains of DOTMLPF. We also participate in high-level experiments and exercises in the Army and with our Joint partners to glean additional insights that inform programs across DOTMLPF. The annual Division Warfighter Exercises, OMNI FUSION, and UNIFIED QUEST—the Army's Title 10 wargame—are invaluable venues for us. So, too, are the annual PHOENIX CHALLENGE—DoD-sponsored conferences focusing on IO challenges and solutions, the

World-Wide IO Conference, and other joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and international venues. We're also blessed with the opportunity to capitalize on the contacts our leaders, staff, and faculty have developed over the years with current and former commanders and S-/G-/J-7s whose thoughts and personal experiences provide important insight into our programs. The work turned in for the writing contest is read and discussed in detail by everyone in the Proponent and it all goes into the synthesis we try to bring to our work as a whole and to each of our initiatives.

**IOS:** *A lot of folks are coming back from repeated trips downrange, and we're getting a lot of first person accounts of applying IO in the real world, which your organization is helping share with the IO community. But doesn't it often come down to something as simple as "what is our intent?"*

**DH:** Our leaders and our units have done a magnificent job of learning and adapting to changing operational environments. Our role as a proponent is to build capability to support whatever it is that commanders need to do in all types of operations and theaters of operations. What we've learned over these past seven years of combat experience and what is foreseeable for years to come, is that we need to emphasize and build capabilities

in three areas: 1) earn the trust and confidence of relevant and friendly publics; 2) win the centuries-long contest of wills with adversaries and potential adversaries; and, 3) win the contest for IT and the electromagnetic spectrum. These three overarching competencies will serve a commander well in all types of operations and theaters. In a sense it's how commanders arrange all the tools in their kitbag in their unique operational environment—at times they may need to push much harder on one side or another depending on the scale of the operation. That's the art and science of our business.

**IOS:** *In a time where we're being stretched to the limit, in both people and resources, how is the Coalition still pulling off some impressive success?*

**DH:** That's certainly a testament to our leadership across DOD and, most importantly, the tremendous service and sacrifice of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, DOD Civilians, Contractors, and their families. We're in the people business, and our people have the most to do with that success. It's an amazing team.

**IOS:** *Let's talk about the makeup of some the Army IO team. The services have taken different tracks in building*

*IO specialists. You mentioned earlier you plan to have quite a few students from other services and Allied countries going through the FA 30 courses. How do you see that evolving?*

**DH:** We have a very strong ABCA [American, British, Canadian, Australian] IO community. We had an especially good recent conference over in the UK, and I met with all the coalition reps at the 2008 Worldwide IO Conference. Their defense establishments view IO somewhat differently than we do, but in many respects the views are very similar. The UK and the US share the same strong emphasis on engagement, and focusing on populations at the local level, and that's encouraging. But, let's not discount the technical side of IO, because we're going to need that allied capability—going back to that balloon analogy of 'just how much is enough.' We will be learning from each other, all the services, interagency, interagency, and coalition partners.

***IOS:** You mentioned earlier about IO practitioners needing a range of abilities. Yet our focus seems to still be in two camps, either technically-focused or influence-focused—going down one track or another. The Army also has an EW Proponent, so how do those communities get along?*

**DH:** Doctrine is changing just as those relationships change. The Army certainly needs to build that EW capability, as demonstrated in the current campaigns [primarily countering improvised explosive devices]. But, we can take advantage of the relationship between the technical side and the human cognitive side - even if we're not

yet sure what that relationship looks like. That's why we're hosting a number of these upcoming symposia, to explore what that environment looks like, and how we can best understand it. We'll be working a lot with the ARCIC [Army Capabilities and Integration Center] in 2009 to conduct some in-depth analysis, to look for gaps in our DOTMLPF domain, and I think we'll begin to understand what that relationship is. I think we're going to see a lot of good input from both communities, and as you put it earlier, "from both sides of the brain."

***IOS:** As a proponent, you're charged with bringing a positive message, but you sound like you mean it.*

**DH:** The future of these mission areas and their corresponding career fields is bright! The Army has recognized

how important they are. FM 3-0, the Army's capstone operations doctrine published in Feb 2008, establishes information as an element of combat power—that is huge! It is recognition of what we've learned, that is, we have to be as skilled in the art and science of using constructive power as we are in the use of destructive force to accomplish the mission and promote conditions that lead to a state of persistent security. That's true today and it's our vision of the foreseeable future. The men and women that comprise this still-nascent mission area are truly the warriors of the 21st Century.

***IOS:** That is certainly a great way to wrap up our time here. Sir; thank you for taking time to visit.*

**DH:** My pleasure; glad we had the opportunity to talk. 